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HEAVEN.

BY

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HEAVEN.

Night makes the glory of the dawn ,
If earth were never darkly clad,
We should not wake with hearts so glad
To think the gloom had been withdrawn.

The light might be as fair as now,
The clouds be tinged to red and gold,
Or, snowy white, might fold on fold,
Rise to the zenith, as the brow

Of some great mountain, capped with snow,
Is lifted high above the plain,
And all untouched by any stain,
Gleams out upon the world below.

The trees and grass might be as green,
The flowers as bright and many hued,
And streams and hills, with tints subdued,
Might add their beauty to the scene.

But not to eyes that looked on light
At every hour would this appear
So sweet, so beautiful, so dear,
As to the eyes that waked from night.

Heaven means not just the same to all ;
All have not felt the nether gloom
That spreads about the silent tomb
Where vainly on the dead we call.

All have not known the blight that comes
O'er cherished hopes and fondest dreams,
When the sweet light that threw its beams
Around our path forsakes our homes.

The mother, as she kneels beside
The empty cradle where once slept
Her darling over whom she kept
Her loving watch till baby died ;

The woman who has seen the arm
On which she leaned grow weak in death,
Has listened till the failing breath
Has filled her soul with wild alarm,

Has risen from beside her dead
To walk through years the path of pain,
Has cried, "O God, to die were gain!"
And finds life given in death's stead;

The man that now in dreams alone
Hears the sweet voice that once has filled
His home with music, but is stilled
Forever now on earth, and gone;

Father and mother, growing old,
Who set their hopes upon their boy,
And saw death all those hopes destroy,
And kissed the lips that grew so cold;—

All these and others who have known
The awful night this life may be
As one by one its fond hopes flee
Into the dark till all are flown,

All these may well with yearning hearts,
Like travelers lost upon the way,
Long for the hour when breaks the day,
And night with all its shades departs.

Around our lives the shadows fall,
They deepen with the passing years ;
Our eyes are often wet with tears,
And darkness seems to cover all.

But yet we trust heaven's day will be
The brighter for the night that's past,
That when the morning breaks at last,
We shall rejoice the more to see ;

And heaven's beauty will appear
More wonderful that once our eyes
Saw naught but blackness, or the skies
Rent by the lurid lightnings here.

But while we wait and grope along
In darkness, stumbling over graves,
Is there no hope that cheers and saves,
And turns our sorrow into song ?

Must all the night be filled with woe,
And blank despair, and hopeless grief ;
Must we reach heaven to find relief,
While years drag by with pace so slow ?

'Twere sad indeed if this were true ;
But when the earth the sun debars
From shining on us, then the stars
Oft glimmer in the distant blue.

And promises of God are given
To cheer us on amid earth's night,
And teach us that there still is light,
Which we shall enter reaching heaven.

And light, though dim, is ever sweet,
And stars can guide the wanderer ;
God's promises blest peace confer,
And they will lead us to his feet.

'Tis not for us while here we rove
To gaze full on the streets of gold,
And see the wealth of joy untold
Provided for us by God's love.

Perchance if we knew all in store
For us beyond the pearly gate,
'Twould be too hard for us to wait
Until life's journey should be o'er.

But gleams of light we gladly hail,
We greet the stars whose silvery rays
Guide us along our devious ways ;
We trust the word that will not fail.

As once our Lord endured the cross,
Despised the shame, and victory won,
Because he saw when toil was done
There would be gain for every loss ;

So we who are of frailer strength
May well seek courage from the thought
Of what for us his love has bought,
And what we shall enjoy at length.

Heaven is a place where Death comes not,
Death that so rends our hearts in twain,
And as we stand above our slain,
And wet with tears the sacred spot

Of earth where they are laid away,
Makes us to feel that all our lives
Are like the barque the tempest drives,
Midst howling wind and dashing spray,

On toward the rocks, where soon the wreck,
Broken to pieces, must go down,
And in the angry vortex drown
The hapless ones that trod the deck.

Death, horrid spectre, that comes in
And takes his seat at every feast,
That claims the greatest as the least,
And never wooes except to win ;—

Death, that with cold and ruthless glance,
Marks as his own the fairest form,
And stills the heart that beat so warm,
As if he pierced it with a lance ;—

Death, that rides now on every breeze,
That sails upon the mountain streams,
That haunts us in our very dreams,
And makes our blood to chill and freeze ;—

Death, that reminds us every hour
That this is not our home, that here
There is not one, however dear,
We can withhold from his dread power ;—

Death, that will snatch the little child
From out the mother's fond embrace,
Blind to her upturned, pleading face,
Deaf to her cries of anguish wild ;—

Death, that cares naught for wedded love,
That laughs to see our poor hearts break,
That seems most glad when he can take
Our best and dearest, and remove

From happiest homes their light and joy,
And fill them utterly with grief,
And loneliness without relief,
And all their happiness destroy,—

Ah, Death will not be there, thank God !
No funeral train shall we behold
Winding along the streets of gold ;
And there will be no up-turned sod

Above which mourning ones shall bow,
With weeping eyes and heavy hearts,
For there no loved one e'er departs,
And Death comes not as he comes now.

There o'er our loves and friendships dear,
No shadow, like the shade of Death,
Will hover, while with bated breath,
We quickly speak, lest he appear.

Each added friendship will not be,
As it is now, a source of pain ;
We'll *know* that we shall meet again,
Nor part through all eternity.

We shall not fear to love too well,
We shall not tremble as we cling
So fondly, lest the silken string
Should snap that bound us, and the spell

Be broken, and life be more sad
That for a moment we had dared
To think our loved ones would be spared,
And had forgotten and been glad.

No mourners go about the streets,
For there is naught to make them mourn ;
There are no sorrows to be borne ;
Each with a smile the others greets.

The smile is from the heart, not set
Upon the face as a disguise,
To hide from keen and curious eyes
The grief that aches within, and yet

Is all too sacred to be spread
Before the world, and rudely scanned
By those who could not understand ;
Who'd seek to comfort, but instead

Would only tear the wound apart
Which time and God had slightly healed,
And which were better left concealed,
And hidden deep within the heart.

Pain is not there ; no sufferer's groan
Breaks the sweet silence of the hour
When all adore Jehovah's power,
And prostrate bend before his throne.

Nor do the pinched lips e'er repress
The rising sigh, nor stifle back
The moan that's prompted by the rack
Of awful torture and distress.

None stand and look, with hearts that break,
To see a form in agony,
Which they would die if they could free,
And on themselves the suffering take.

Thank God there is in heaven no pain ;
That that with death is left behind ;
And they who here no comfort find
May well exclaim, "To die is gain."

No curse is there ; the blight of sin
Is wholly and forever gone ;
The pure white robes which there we don
Shall cover souls as pure within.

No guilty conscience there will cause
The sinful one to hide away,
As hides the murderer from the day,
Lest God in wrath for broken laws

Should on the guilty soul look down,
And seeing its most secret thought,
And all the evil it has wrought,
Should blast it with his awful frown.

And none are there to tempt to wrong,
And make the struggle to do right
One constant, long-continued fight :
For in that vast and holy throng

That gathers round God's throne on high
There are no souls with foul intent,
Upon their fellows' ruin bent,
Nor one that loves or makes a lie.

They hunger not nor thirst who reach
The banquet hall where Jesus spreads
The feast of love, and on them sheds
The blessings that he has for each.

We pity him who lacks for bread,
Who in a famine-stricken land,
From door to door with outstretched hand,
Drags slowly on till he falls dead.

But there is hunger worse than this ;
The hunger of the soul that yearns
For love that nevermore returns,
And dreams of the departed bliss,

And wanders on all, all alone,
And gladly takes from friends so kind
The gift that's offered, but to find,
Well meant for bread, 'tis but a stone.

And there is hunger of the soul
For God, for truth, for holiness,
For power sins promptings to repress,
And all the evil thoughts control.

We hunger here, and thirst, and go,
Like travelers o'er a desert waste,
And we do well like them to haste
To where the living waters flow.

Hunger and thirst shall be no more
Beneath the shadow of the tree
That bears its fruits for you and me,
And stands upon the river's shore.

And there will be no tears in heaven :
How strange 'twill seem to see no eyes
Drop showers of grief, as April skies
Drop rain from clouds that, swiftly driven,

Follow each other close and fast ;
And hardly give the sun a chance
To cheer the earth with his bright glance
Before new clouds succeed the last.

It were a pity to have tears
Banished from earth, while yet earth's woe
So needed them, and craved them so
To give relief through sorrowing years.

God pity him who cannot weep,
Whose heart aches while his eyes are dry,
Who makes no moan, emits no cry
To tell of all the woes that deep

Within his soul, like mountain fires,
Girt round with solid walls of rock,
Burn, press, and surge, but find their shock
Resisted till their force expires,

Or sinks a little into rest,
And gathers for another strife,
That will not end except with life,
Or rending of the mountain's crest.

Thank God for tears, and blest are they
Whose tears flow freest at the call
Of sorrow, for like showers they fall,
And help the clouds to melt away.

But tears in heaven we shall not crave;
Beyond the pain, the grief, the woe
Which we have suffered here below,—
Beyond the shadow of the grave,—

Beyond the parting and the loss,—
Beyond the sin, the curse, the fall,—
Beyond our sorrows, one and all,—
Beyond the bearing of the cross,—

Bathed in the sunlight of God's love,
Enjoying bliss undreamed of yet,—
Why should our eyes with tears be wet?
Why should we weep in heaven above?

For weary ones there will be rest;
And oh, how sweet, when toil is done,
The battle fought, the victory won,
To lean upon the Saviour's breast,

And as a little child that sleeps,
Close folded in the mother's arms,
And there forgets all rude alarms,
And only dreams of her who keeps

Her loving watch, and guards him well,
So by our Saviour's touch to be
Lulled into rest from care so free
That naught can break the blissful spell,

Till he shall bid us wake, and strong
With the new strength of heavenly life,
That wearies not with toil or strife,
Go forth to mingle with the throng

That without ceasing praise their Lord ;
Or upon works of mercy bent,
Haste wheresoever they are sent,
To do the bidding of his word.

I doubt not that in yonder sphere
There will be service, even as now,
But rendered not with aching brow,
And weary hands, as it is here.

There will be peace : no conflict then
Will rage between the earthly lust
That tells us we are born of dust,
And that which makes us truly men.

The spirit will be all in all ;
The body, fashioned to its will,
Will aid it with a heaven-born skill,
Nor ever seek to make it fall.

Between the soul and God will be
Such oneness of desire and thought
That every impulse will be wrought
Into the heavenly harmony.

There will be music ; harps of gold,
Touched by the hands of the redeemed,
Will wake such chords as would have seemed
Too sacred for the earth to hold.

And voices that we loved to hear
Once in our homes, and long have missed,
Since the cold marble lips we kissed,
And turned away to silence drear,—

These voices we shall hear again ;
And all the song that rolls through heaven
Will be the sweeter that 'tis given
Our ears to mark the grand Amen

Made beautiful by tones we love :
We'll join the chorus, heart and voice,
And there forevermore rejoice,
United in the world above.

And never was there grander theme,
And never nobler song should rise,
Than from that chorus of the skies
Which sings of him who to redeem

Their souls from death came here to die ;
Who gave his life that they might live,
The costliest gift that he could give,
Who bought for them the home on high.

There will be love ; God were not there
If love were absent,—God is love :
However it has seemed, 'twill prove
That all our lives, with loving care

He has watched over us, and felt
A Father's pity for our loss,
And helped us bear each heavy cross,
As on our knees we've humbly knelt,

And asked him for the grace to keep
Our faltering faith from giving o'er,
And bring us safely to the shore
Of heaven where we might cease to weep.

Love will be there ; as well expect
The Sun in darkness to abide
As that the heaven by Jesus side
Will not God's wondrous love reflect.

For there no clouds will come between
The soul and the celestial rays
That make such perfect, glorious days
As mortal eyes have never seen.

Days that need never know a night,
For memories of earth will be
The dark foil that eternally
Will make heaven's day appear more bright.

We then shall know and feel God's love
As we have never felt it yet,
Nor can while here with eyelids wet
So oft with tears we sadly rove.

And we shall love God as we ought :
How poor our love is now, how cold !
How often when the tale is told
Of what for us God's love has wrought,

We listen as one hears in dreams
A sound he heeds not ! but on high,
As some clear lake reflects the sky,
We shall give back love's sacred beams.

And we shall know the Shepherd's care,
So gentle, loving, mild, and kind ;
How sweet 'twill be for us to find
Our souls so sheltered over there !

Like lambs amidst the wolves, some here
Are hasting tremblingly along ;
And, forced to mingle with the throng
That fills them with a nameless fear,

Are longing, as words scarce can tell,
For some kind hand to guide their feet,
Some strong arm that, as foes they meet,
Can bear them up,—defend them well.

“There waits a fold whence none can stray,”
Where wolves come not, where dangers cease,
Where Jesus gives eternal peace,
And as a Shepherd guards the way.

And love from soul to soul will flow;
I doubt not that in heaven above
We shall renew the blameless love
That made our heaven here below.

What! think you that in any sphere,
In all the universe of God,
Two souls that once together trod
The paths of joy and sorrow here,

That knew each one the other's thought,
That felt each for the other's pain,
Rejoiced, each in the other's gain,
Each for the other's comfort wrought,

Could meet, and pass, and be unknown
Each to the other's loving heart,
And thoughtlessly could drift apart
Like clouds by wandering zephyrs blown?

Not if the soul shall then remain
Its real self, if you and I
Shall live with God beyond the sky,
And our identity retain.

As we shall know our risen Lord,
So, I doubt not, we'll also know
Our loved ones who before us go,
Or follow, trusting in his word.

Heaven will be home ; and home is not
The house we live in ; that may stand
Firm, and unaltered by the hand
Of Time or Change ; and every spot

About it may be just the same
That it has been for many years ;
But all is nothing, seen through tears,
Since some one died and silence came.

Heaven will be home ; for hearts that ache
There waits love, sympathy, and all
That now they miss, while shadows fall
Around them till the poor hearts break.

Heaven will be home ; I know not yet
Just how its beauties will unfold ;
Nor sage, nor prophet e'er has told ;
But one thing I can ne'er forget ;

'Tis this—that he who loved us so
That painfully for us he died,
That Jesus Christ, the Crucified,
When he was just about to go

Away from earth, this promise gave,
That for his loved ones he'd prepare
A place in heaven, over there,
A home for them beyond the grave.

He knows us, loves us ; and I trust
That when the shore of heaven we gain,
And leave behind the world of pain,
And hear no longer, “ Dust to dust,”

Each one by Christ from sin redeemed
Will fall in rapture at his feet,
And wonder heaven is so complete,
And so much better than he dreamed.

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